Field notes Gould

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August 16 - Up early to supervise the packing of the gear. Finished packing in early afternoon and loaded all the gear on deck. We inflated the rubber raft, and in spite of the worried looks from everyone, we got all the eight men plus equipment into the raft without any trouble. The landing was no sweat after we had located the channel. We landed on the eastern tip of the ocean side, at about 6:00PM. From ship we could see large numbers of Sooty Terns flying over the SW side of the island; Doug Whitman estimated that there were 5000+. We set up camp on the extreme eastern end of the island, which turned out to be a very good spot because it was far enough from the birds that our camp activities did overly excite them.

A preliminary survey of the island yielded the following results:

Laysan Albatross - Nestlings, less than 50
Masked Booby - Nestlings and adults, about 20
Red-footed Booby - Adults, Sub-adults and nestlings, about 20
Brown Booby - Pairs in all stages of nesting, from having two eggs in the nest to having immatures and sub-adults. These birds were pretty well scattered over the island, but there was a large group of them in the centre of the island along the ocean side. We estimated 75 birds plus or minus 10.
Greater Frigates - Roosting adults and many immatures plus a few nestlings. Perhaps 70 nesting birds. (The immatures and nestlings were still attended by the adults)
Sooty Terns - Adults with nestlings, plus Sub-adults and adults roosting on the beach at night - approx. 20,000.
Grey Back Tern - Adults nestlings and immatures, about 5000.
Fairy Tern - Adults 3
Wedgetail Shearwater - Adults with small chicks plus many roosting above ground at night.
Christmas Shearwater - 6 adults, 2 in one burrow. Paul saw one with a band but was unable to capture it.
Common Noddy - Adults on eggs - 500, adults roosting - 500.
Hawaiian Noddy - 5000 adults roosting in the tall grass and in the Scaevola bushes.
Ruddy Turnstones - 50-100
Red-tailed Tropic-Bird - 5 or 6 nests with eggs and nestlings.
Golden Plover - One in flock of Turnstones.
Seals, Hawaiian Monk - 20+
Turtles - One banded tag #147

After making a radio check we all went down to the West end of the island to band terns. We banded 500 nestlings and 500 adults by 12:00, decided to knock off early on this our first night. In bed at 1:00AM.

August 17 Up at 7:00 to make radio check at 8:00. Waited around for the boat to come in. Paul caught and banded a fairy tern. After boat was taken care of, Paul and Alan went out to band the 39 Albatross Nestlings. Ken and I banded 62 Frigates young and Boobies, covering the island. Paul saw a red tagged Sooty tern but was unable to catch it. Dick spent morning with broom and tweezers in a futile attempt to rescue a Seal skeleton. Paul went out and banded 7 Tropics, found one return while the rest of us ate lunch of the good food supplied fresh to us by the ship. We saw two Hawaiian Noddies on eggs in the long grass in the centre of the island. At one time I counted a max. of

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Insert: The birds of Southeast Is., final counts and estimates

Laysan Albatross - 39 nestlings, 2 died during our stay.
Masked Booby - 2 imm., 50 adults.
Red- footed Booby - 3 nestlings, Adults and Subadults- 25
Brown Booby - 23 nestlings (1 to a nest)
6 nests with 2 eggs each
1 nest with one egg
2 nests with one chick too small to band
+ 2 nests with two chicks " " " "
34 nests total
Adults - 100 ± 10
Imm. - 3
Great Frigate Birds - 18 nestlings
+ 1 chick too sm. to band
19 nests
Adults - 100 approx.
Red-tailed Tropic Bird - Adults - 15
Nests about 6 ?
Sooty Terns Imm. and nestlings - about 6,000
Adults - about 15,000 (15,000- 20,000)
Fairy Terns Adults - 6
Common Noddy Adults 500
Nests with eggs ~ 100
Hawaiian Noddy Adults ~ 750
Nests with chicks - 2
Nests with i egg - 6
Wedgetail Shearwater Adults ~ 14,000
Nests with nestlings ?
Christmas Shearwater Adults 10
Bristle-thighed Curlew Adults 15
Ruddy Turnstones ~ 75
Golden Plover Adult - 1
Wandering Tattler Adult 1
Bulwers Petrel Adults - 5

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Aug. 17 cont.
of 15 tropic birds hovering over the island. Saw 15 Bristle T. curlews, one Golden Plover. I rested until 2:30 then went out with Paul to get the Red tagged bird. I saw him and shot him. Ken, Dick and Alan banded 300 Sooty Terns, Paul and I tried first to band Hawaiian Noddies and Grey back Terns. We had no luck with these, so we tried to find some of the Wedgetail, but couldnot find an of these either. This points up important fact, thatis these birds that are so numerous in the evening were not on the island during the day. We started out at 9:00 to band Wedge-tails, banded 900 by 12:30. Then we went over to the Sooty colony and finished off the 700 bands left from the afternoon. Finished these off in good strids by 3:00AM morning of the 18th.

August 18 Ken, Dick, Alan and Al went after Booby and finished off the last of those bands. Paul and I worked very hard on getting Grey backs. We also banded one Turnstone and three Bulwers petrels, and found two more Bulwers that were banded. After getting 50 birds on our multismallbird string, we switched over to Hawaiian Noddies, banding 76.
Next we tried to get shorebirds, but it was getting light so we headed back to camp.. Slept for awhile, and missed the 8:00 radio check by 20 min. Got up grudgingly to help the boat in at 8:30. We got in the boat and headed for Bird Is. Landed there and found:

3 Masked Booby
3 Ruddy Turnstone
1 Wandering Tattler
1 Grey back tern

From Bird Is. we could just see Sand Is. on the horizon so we headed that way, landed there, and saw:

9 Masked Booby
2 Turnstone
100 Hawaiian Noddy
20 Common Noddy

Continued on to Grass Is. and saw the following, of which we banded some, and also phoned ship which was just over the horizon (a miricle of modern cmmunications) to ask them to pick us up at Seal Is. On Grass were:

5 Fairy terns
250+ Great Frigates
3000± Common Noddy
3 Hawaiian Noddy
3 Laysan Albatross Nestlings
2 Sanderlings
3 Ruddy Turnstone
1 Tattler
1 Imm. Red foot Booby
20 Sooty Tern
8 Red-tailed Tropics
18 Wedgetail nests with eggs or chicks.

From Grass we headed toward Seals Is., were we saw:

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Aug. 18 cont.

500 Common Noddy
700 Hawaiian Noddies
2 Fairy Terns
1000-1500 Sooty Terns
15 Grey back terns
75 Great Frigates
1 laysan Albatross Nestling
13 Tropic birds
9 Masked Booby
9 Turnstones
4 Wedgetails, there was of a large nocturnaal roosting site.

We looked across at Kittery and saw :

2 Seals
1 Great Frigate
1 Grey Back tern
2 Masked Booby (ADULT)
3 Imm. Masked Booby
1 Brown Booby

It was decided that there wasnot enough life on Kittery to merit a trip over, so when we had finished our banding, we loaded up the raft and headed out through truel treacherous surf to the ship. We showered and ate on board. We went back to Southeast Is., and examined the dead Albatross for bands, and counted these until dark. We counted 800 dead, most in large piles in the washed area, midisland on seaward side. All except Paul sacked out till 12:30, morning of the 19th. Paul banded more Greybacks and 100 Wedgetai

August 19 Paul came in at 12:30 Am and we all got up and went out to band 500 more Wedgetails and 100 more Sooty Terns. We just barely finished the Sooties before dawn. We went back to camp and slept for a few minutes before taking down the camp. We had everything packed and in good order by 8:00Am when the boat came in. We departed for North Island, arriving at S. North Is. at 11:00 after braving the drenching spray for over two hours. We counted 26 Seals and 10 Masked Booby (2 returns) and had a great time playing with two baby seals while we attempted to make radio contact with the ship. After the wonderful record of service given by the radios up to that point we were disappointed to fond that we could not make contack. We then headed on to North island to set up camp, an operation that took unreasonably long because of too many chiefs. We finally made contack, by changing our freguency. (Doug had Dropped the radio, so it had lost the setting that I had tuned it to on the ship) After eating we took a well deserved nap until 7:30PM. The moon was too bright to even consider banding so we went back to sleep after trying to band,until 2:00AM morning of the 20th.

August 20 Up at 2:00 Am with a bright moon to band 400 Wedgetails finishing at 3:30, then we did a large portion ofthe Booby population. In the morning I banded 49 frigate nestlings and helped Paul and Ken scare up 100 Common Noddy nestlings. Merrill added to our knowledge by taking habitat photos. Left Island and were underway to ship by 11:00 Am in the calmest sea I've ever. Repacked and stored equipment, dried clothing, showered etc. Ship underway for Lisianski by 1600. Had a bad argument

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Aug. 20 cont.
with Merrill about the duties and responsibility of GS-5 personnel with respect to the project. Afterword had long talkk with Whitman about it which calmed me enough to be able to go to sleep. In bed 12:30.

August 21 Up at 7:00 to eat finish packing and leave ship. At this point all leadership is breaking down for want of a strong leader. Everyone except Paul is pissed at me for being a bossy loudmouth uppidy GS-5, not without reason, but someone has to make the decisions. This morning I decided that my capacity as an advisor was no longer needed and I resolved to let Ken make decisons. I tried to talk to Ken about it, was disappointed in both things. This experience is becoming very depressing for me. We arrived at Lisianski at 9:30am. The sea was still eiry still, so still that when on land we could lay in the water and still see the water line of the ship, over a mile away. The island was hot, heavily vegetated, and swarming with flies. We split up into two teams to survey the shore and island, arriving back at the camp about noon. We had the usual controversy over fishballs, then went out to the area behind the camp to band Sooty terns. We banded 400 among us, then Paul went out and finished the Tropic-bird string and banded several Booby while the rest of us saught refuge from the flies in the water. Later we went out and finish 41-100 of the last Frigate string. I found and caught a red tagged Sooty Tern, number 753-23764. That night we slept till 11:45 and then went to do 2500 Sooty terns. Paul did 100 Bonin Is. Petrels, of which there were thousands on the island, but very hard to find at night. Al and I did 61 Booby, finding many returns. (Paul had done 100 Wedgetails while we were asleep) In the early am I found and captured a most extraordinary bird, an ALBINO SOOTY TERN.
I carried it in my shirt until I finished banding, then took it back to camp where i made a cage for it. After this I worked catching fish for it. In bed at about 6:00 am morning of the 22nd.

August 22 Up early after about 2 hours of blessed sleep because of intollerable flys. Alan and I banded 500 Sooty tern chicks, and Ken, Paul and Dick did 1000 among them. The two Alans helped me catch fish for our captives, which now included a partial albino Sooty brought in by Dick. Boat in at noon with sight seers, food, Doug, and fish ball hunters. Spent rest of day trying to avoid the blasted flies. We started banding right after dark ina frantic effort to use up the last of our 10000 no. 3 bands. Alan and I went back to the same place we had been befre and banded 1000 Sooty, and 100 Wedgetail. Ken and Dick banded 1500 Sooty, and Paul did 300 Wedgetails. We all finished at 1:00am mourning of the23rd.

August 23 Paul went out again with his characteristic stamina and banded another 100 Bonin island Petrels. I went along the shore and caught 30 more fish. The rest went to sleep. Paul and I returned to camp at 3:30 am, figuring on a quike snooz before we had to get up at 4;00 and take down the camp. We all over slept till 5:30 when we were awakened by Doug and the boat.

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We took down the camp in a record shattering ½ hour, and made it out to the ship at 6:30 am just minutes after our scheduled time.

We got all the gear on board, stached it, hawled up the raft, deflated it, started the tents and cots drying on the deck, and thnn I went to sleep. Dick cleaned up the lab. Up for diner, then paul and I started the tedious job of writing up hthe banding reports.....